

Iran already possesses enough nuclear fuel to build two nuclear weapons. Even while negotiations were taking place, Iran continued to enrich uranium in defiance of five United Nations Security Council resolutions, increasing its supply of uranium and becoming more and more dangerous each and every day.

While there are many domestic issues that demand the attention of us in Congress, we must not forget an Iranian call for a world without a United States or an Israel. A nuclear-armed Iran threatens the safety of American troops in the region. It is a threat to Israel's existence, emboldens terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah and leads to a perilous nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

These are all things we cannot accept and must not tolerate.

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Passage of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act takes an important step to counter the Iranian threat to our national security and to that of our strong democratic ally Israel.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. EDWARDS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, President Obama is certainly to be commended for the thoughtful and thorough consideration that he has given to our alternatives in Afghanistan. In essence, given the mess that he was bequeathed there, he was asked to choose the least bad alternative.

My personal belief is that a good man made the wrong choice. But I think it is incumbent on this Congress to do as our President did and give thoughtful and thorough consideration of what our alternatives are there and whether there is a better way than dispatching another 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan to assure the security of our families.

We have had now almost a decade without a debate of Afghanistan policy in this Congress. I believe we must take a hard look at how hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of the lives of young Americans are being put on the line in Afghanistan and ask if this is the most effective way to defeat terrorism.

Some were, of course, pleased that the President indicated in his speech that July 2011, a period of a little more than a year and a half, would mark a point in this long war at which we would see the beginning of the end of

the war and some of the troops that were being dispatched there would begin to return home.

Almost as soon as the speech ended, administration officials began to explain that deadline away. First we learned that not all the troops would get there until the fall of next year. They're not going for the weekend or a 2-week stay or a stay of less than a year. And then Secretary Gates made clear in interviews the nature of this July 2011 deadline. He said that at the time of July 2011, some "handful," in his words, or some small number or whatever the conditions permit might be departing Afghanistan at that time but that we would, in his words, "have a significant number of forces there for some considerable period of time." It was only a few days after that that Afghan President Hamid Karzai indicated just how long that commitment might have to be when he announced that "for another 15 to 20 years Afghanistan will not be able to sustain a force of that nature and capability with its own resources."

We are talking about a very extended commitment of more and more American troops and more and more American dollars, ironically, at a time that some of our allies who've been in Afghanistan, like the Canadians, like the Dutch, are making plans to withdraw their troops as our troops enter the country.

I have heard from not a few constituents expressing their concern about this decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan. Whether we agree or disagree on whether this is the best approach, we all agree that our objective is to work together to keep our families safer. One person to whom I presented the Veteran of the Year award just last month in Bastrop, Texas, Retired Colonel Bill Stanberry, twice awarded the Legion of Merit and inducted into the Infantry Officers Hall of Fame, offered this observation:

"There is no sign or promise of a viable leadership in the government in Afghanistan, an ingredient that is absolutely essential to the success of the program. We are allowing our adversaries to determine the kind of wars we fight and how we fight them. We need to find ways to exploit our strengths and not be lured into battles of war where our substantially weaker adversaries have the advantage by dictating how we fight."

Our strategic choices in Afghanistan, I believe, are not narrowly limited to either escalating rapidly, as the President has proposed, or departing immediately, but they include more effective ways of using the resources that we have already committed to accomplish our original objectives. And apparently, our Ambassador in Afghanistan, former Lieutenant-General Karl Eikenberry, had some of the same concerns that I do. It is widely reported that he sent at least two classified cables to Washington before the announcement expressing deep concerns

about sending more U.S. troops to Afghanistan without a meaningful demonstration by President Karzai, who just had stolen a million votes to stay in power, that his government would be able to tackle corruption and mismanagement that has fueled the Taliban's rise in strength.

We went to take out al Qaeda, not to change it into Switzerland. Let's keep that commitment and do it in the most cost-effective way.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, just last week we observed another Human Rights Day without freedom in Cuba.

As to be expected, the regime had its thugs out in full force to harass and attack all who dared to walk the streets in support of this important day and what it represents to the world community. For 2 days, the members of the peaceful Ladies in White group were pursued and harassed by agents of the regime. Marches and peaceful demonstrations in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms came to an abrupt end as state security forces rounded up, detained, and brutally attacked some of the participants.

Yusnaimi Jorge Soca, wife of Dr. Darsi Ferrer, was one of the many apprehended by the secret police on her way to one of the planned marches at the Villalon Park in Havana. Dr. Ferrer is an Afro-Cuban civil rights leader currently imprisoned by the dictatorship. His alleged crime? "Illegally" purchasing materials to repair damages to his home. The truth? Dr. Ferrer has worked tirelessly to expose the reality of Castro's apartheid health care system and the abysmal disregard for fundamental freedom and human rights. Yusnaimi was threatened on this Human Rights Day by the Cuban dictatorship, as well as her husband, in an attempt to intimidate them into submission and silence.

Those seeking freedom in Cuba, however, have shown time and time again that they will not waver in the face of repression.

The Castro tyranny does not limit the application of its repressive tactics to the oppressed Cuban people, however. For example, Chris Stimpson, Second Secretary of the British Embassy, was also pursued and chased away by the regime's mob apparatus on Thursday. And on Friday, an American